

[Big Tony]

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[American Lives?]

BIG TONY

Big Tony works in Reliable's Packing Co. It's one of these two by four plants. There's just about thirty girls in the whole place. One time Big Tony tried to get the girls in the union. He's a good CIO man, Tony is, and helped organize the union all over the yards. Jul 6-1939

Those girls up at Reliable's were funny as hell. Ask them, darn near any one of them, where did they work, what dept., and they'd all have the same answer. "Oh, I'm the switchboard operator, I work in the office." They didn't want anybody to know the work they actually did. Ashamed, see. Say, they'd even tell their boyfriends that crap.

Well, they handed Big tony that. He didn't say nothing, then. Just stood there looking them over, all those dumb dames putting on an act like that. Telephone operators. Yeah.

Next day, fellows kept calling Reliable's, all day long, I want to talk to Stella W., the switchboard operator. Or Mary, the switchboard operator, or Liz, or Helen, and so on, all of

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them 'switchboard' operators. They had the foreman standing on their heads, running back and forth, yelling at the girls, and finally the super comes in and wants to know what's the big idea. Funniest part of it was, the girls didn't know what it was all about and they were scared as hell, with the super threatening to lay off any girl who ever again misrepresented her work at the plant.

Bit Tony, after work, he hung around outside with his gang, and when the girls come out, he started wisecracking about the swell switchboard operators. His gang was in on it, see, and he talked real loud, pretending he didn't know the girls was listening. Finally, they caught on, but not 2 a peep out of them. They put their foot in it and so they took the razzing. Tony laid it on thick! How he laid it on!

Most of the girls are in the CIO now, but they still get kidded about being 'switchboard' operators.

It's hard to put anything over on Big Tony.

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